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## 10 drugs targeted for Medicare price negotiations as Biden pitches cost reductions

By C. MEGERIAN/T. MURPHY/A. SEITZ  
Associated Press

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — President Joe Biden touted the potential cost savings of Medicare's first-ever price negotiations for widely used prescription drugs on Tuesday as he struggles to convince Americans that he's improved their lives as he runs for reelection. The drugs include the blood thinner Eliquis, diabetes treatment Jardiance and eight other medications. The negotiation process was authorized under the Inflation Reduction Act, which Biden signed last year, capping decades of debate over whether the federal government should be allowed to haggle with pharmaceutical companies.

Continued on Page 2



Bottles of medicine ride on a belt at a mail-in pharmacy warehouse in Florence, N.J., July 10, 2018.

Associated Press

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# 10 drugs targeted for Medicare price negotiations as Biden pitches cost reductions

Continued from Front

Any lower prices won't take effect for three years, and the path forward could be further complicated by litigation from drugmakers and heavy criticism from Republicans.

But the effort is a centerpiece of Biden's reelection pitch as the Democrat tries to show Americans he's deserving of a second term because of the work he's doing to lower costs while the country is struggling with inflation. The drug negotiations, like many of Biden's biggest policy moves, will take time to play out, and his challenge is to persuade the public to be patient.

"For all of you out there, I get it, and millions of Americans get it," Biden said at the White House. "I promise you. I'm going to have your back and I'll never stop fighting for you on this issue."

He noted that he got "no help from the other team" — meaning Republicans — when it came to lowering prescription costs.

The drugs on the list announced Tuesday accounted for \$3.4 billion in out-of-pocket costs for Medicare patients last year.

The Medicare program paid more than \$50 billion for the drugs between June



President Joe Biden, followed by Vice President Kamala Harris, arrives to speak during an event on prescription drug costs, in the East Room of the White House, Tuesday, Aug. 29, 2023, in Washington. Associated Press

1, 2022, and May 31, according to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, or CMS.

That includes more than \$16 billion on Eliquis, a total that does not count discounts or rebates that are already negotiated for the drug. The drug from Pfizer and Bristol-Myers Squibb treats blood clots in the legs and lungs and reduces the risk of stroke in people with an irregular heartbeat called atrial fibrillation.

The diabetes treatments Jardiance from Eli Lilly and Co. and Boehringer Ingelheim and Januvia from

Merck made the list. It also included Amgen's autoimmune disease treatment Enbrel and Entresto from Novartis, which is used to treat heart failure.

Other drugs on the list include AstraZeneca's diabetes and heart failure treatment Farxiga and three drugs from Johnson & Johnson: the blood thinner Xarelto, the blood cancer treatment Imbruvica and it's biggest seller, Stelara, an IV treatment for psoriasis and other inflammatory disorders.

The list also includes several versions of Novo Nordisk's

Fiasp, a fast-acting insulin taken around meals.

The announcement Tuesday is another significant step toward taming drug pricing under the Inflation Reduction Act, which was signed by Biden last year. The law also calls for a \$2,000 annual cap on how much people with Medicare have to pay out of pocket for drugs starting in 2025.

In addition, the law already caps out-of-pocket costs for insulin at \$35 a month for Medicare patients.

"We are here today with the firm belief that in the

United States of America, no senior should have to choose between whether they fill their prescription or fill their fridge with food," Vice President Kamala Harris said.

For drugs on the list released Tuesday, the government aims to negotiate the lowest maximum fair price. That could help some patients who have coverage but still face big bills like coinsurance payments when they get a prescription.

About 9% of Medicare beneficiaries age 65 and older said in 2021 that they did not fill a prescription or skipped a drug dose due to cost, according to research by the Commonwealth Fund, which studies health care issues.

The new drug price negotiations aim "to basically make drugs more affordable while also still allowing for profits to be made," said Gretchen Jacobson, who researches Medicare issues at Commonwealth.

The federal government will benefit most from any lowered drug prices, noted Larry Levitt, an executive vice president for health policy at KFF, another non-profit that studies health care. But he said that if Medicare spends less on prescription drugs, then premiums for everyone with its drug coverage also should fall. □



House Majority Leader Steve Scalise, R-La., joined at right by Majority Whip Tom Emmer, R-Minn., arrives for a news conference at the Capitol in Washington, Tuesday, June 6, 2023. Associated Press

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — he has been diagnosed with a form of blood cancer known as multiple myeloma and is undergoing

## No. 2 House Republican Steve Scalise is diagnosed with blood cancer

treatment. Scalise, 57, said he will continue to serve in the House. He described the cancer as "very treatable" and said it was detected early. The Louisiana Republican was among several people wounded in 2017 when a rifle-wielding attacker fired on lawmakers on a baseball field in Alexandria, Virginia, outside Washington. Scalise was shot in the hip and endured lengthy hospitalizations, multiple surgeries and painful rehabilitation. The

cancer diagnosis came, Scalise said, after he had not been feeling like himself in the past week. Blood tests showed some irregularities and after additional screening, he said he was diagnosed with multiple myeloma. "I have now begun treatment, which will continue for the next several months," Scalise said in a statement. "I expect to work through this period and intend to return to Washington, continuing my work as Majority Leader

and serving the people of Louisiana's First Congressional District." Scalise also thanked his medical team and said he was "incredibly grateful we were able to detect this early and that this cancer is treatable." Colleagues in the House and members of Louisiana's congressional delegation offered Scalise and his family their encouragement in response to the announcement, some recalling his determination following the 2017 shooting. □



# FBI and European partners seize major malware network

By FRANK BAJAK and STEFANIE DAZIO

Associated Press

**LOS ANGELES (AP)** — U.S. officials said Tuesday that the FBI and its European partners infiltrated and seized control of a major global malware network used for more than 15 years to commit a gamut of online crimes including crippling ransomware attacks.

They then remotely removed the malicious software agent known as Qakbot from thousands of infected computers.

Cybersecurity experts said they were impressed by the deft dismantling of the network but cautioned that any setback to cyber-crime would likely be temporary.

"Nearly every sector of the economy has been victimized by Qakbot," Martin Estrada, the U.S. attorney in Los Angeles, said Tuesday in announcing the take-down. He said the criminal network had facilitated about 40 ransomware attacks alone over 18 months that investigators said netted Qakbot administrators about \$58 million.

Qakbot's ransomware victims included an Illinois-based engineering firm, financial services organizations in Alabama and Kansas, along with a Maryland defense manufacturer and a Southern California food distribution company, Estrada said.

Officials said \$8.6 million in cybercurrency was seized or frozen but no arrests were announced.

Estrada said the investigation is ongoing. He would not say where administrators of the malware, which marshaled infected machines into a botnet of zombie computers, were located. Cybersecurity researchers say they are believed to be in Russia and/or other former Soviet states.

Officials estimated the so-called malware loader, a digital Swiss knife for cybercrooks also known as Pinkslipbot and Qbot, was leveraged to cause hundreds



U.S. Attorney Martin Estrada announces in Los Angeles on Tuesday, Aug. 29, 2023 the multinational take down operation of Qakbot malware.

Associated Press

by stealing data and disrupting schools, hospitals, local governments and businesses worldwide.

Beginning Friday in an operation officials dubbed "Duck Hunt," the FBI along with Europol and law enforcement and justice partners in France, the United Kingdom, Germany, the Netherlands, Romania and Latvia seized more than 50 Qakbot servers and identified more than 700,000 infected computers, more than 200,000 of them in the U.S. effectively cutting off criminals from their quarry. The FBI then used the seized Qakbot infrastructure to remotely dispatch updates that deleted the malware from thousands of infected computers. □

of millions of dollars in damage since first appearing in 2008 as an information-stealing bank trojan. They said millions of people in nearly every country in the world have been affected. Typically delivered via phishing email infections, Qakbot gave criminal hackers initial access to violated computers. They could then deploy additional payloads including ransomware, steal sensitive information or gather intelligence on victims to facilitate financial fraud and crimes such as tech support and romance scams. The Qakbot network was "literally feeding the global cybercrime supply chain," said Donald Alway, assistant director in charge of the FBI's Los Angeles office, calling it "one of the most devastating cybercriminal tools in history." The most commonly detected malware in the first half of 2023, Qakbot impacted one in 10 corporate networks and accounted for about 30% of attacks globally, a pair of cybersecurity firms found. Such "initial access" tools allow extortionist ransomware gangs to skip the initial step of penetrating computer networks, making them major facilitators for the far-flung, mostly Russian-speaking criminals who have wreaked havoc

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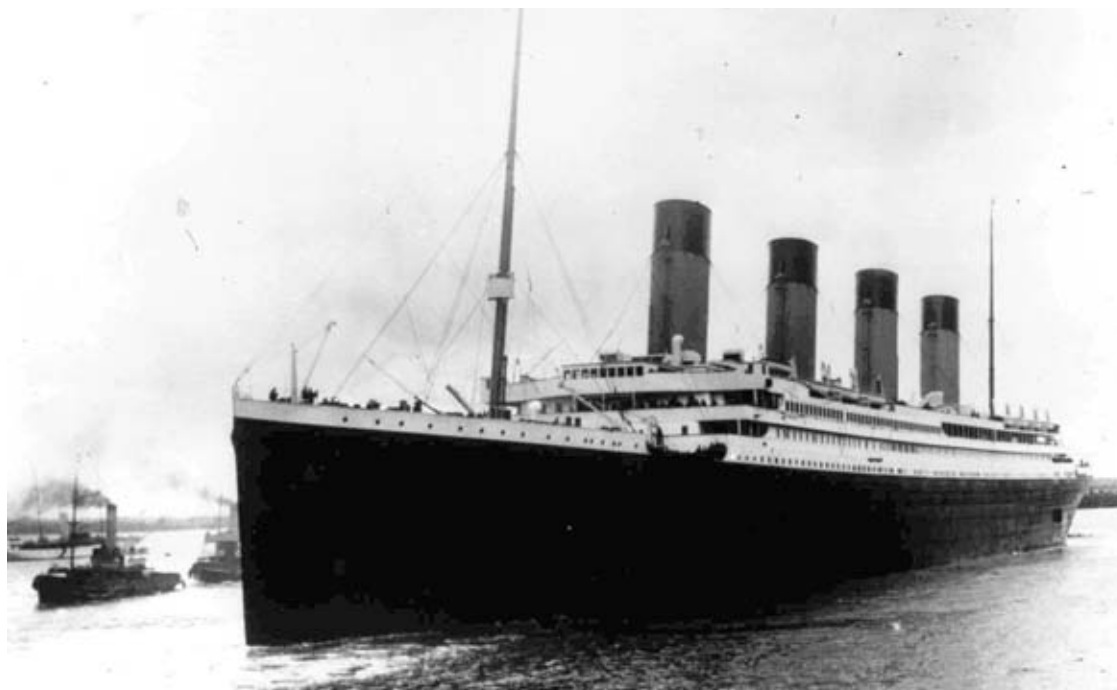


# A new Titanic expedition is planned. The US is fighting it, says wreck is a grave site

By **BEN FINLEY**  
**Associated Press**

**NORFOLK, Va. (AP)** — The U.S. government is trying to stop a planned expedition to recover items of historical interest from the sunken Titanic, citing a federal law and an international agreement that treat the shipwreck as a hallowed gravesite.

The expedition is being organized by RMS Titanic Inc., the Georgia-based firm that owns the salvage rights to the world's most famous shipwreck. The company exhibits artifacts that have been recovered from the wreck site at the bottom of the North Atlantic, from silverware to a piece of the Titanic's hull. The government's challenge comes more than two months after the Titan submersible imploded near the sunken ocean liner, killing five people. But this legal fight has nothing to do with the June tragedy, which involved a different company and an unconventionally designed vessel. The battle in the U.S. District Court in Norfolk, Virginia, which oversees Titanic salvage matters,



The Titanic leaves Southampton, England, on her maiden voyage, April 10, 1912.

**Associated Press**

hinges instead on federal law and a pact with Great Britain to treat the sunken Titanic as a memorial to the more than 1,500 people who died. The ship hit an iceberg and sank in 1912. The U.S. argues that entering the Titanic's severed hull or physically altering or disturbing the wreck is regulated by federal law and its agreement with Britain. Among the government's

concerns is the possible disturbance of artifacts and any human remains that may still exist.

"RMST is not free to disregard this validly enacted federal law, yet that is its stated intent," U.S. lawyers argued in court documents filed Friday. They added that the shipwreck "will be deprived of the protections Congress granted it."

RMST's expedition is ten-

tatively planned for May 2024, according to a report it filed with the court in June. The company said it plans to take images of the entire wreck. That includes "inside the wreck where deterioration has opened chasms sufficient to permit a remotely operated vehicle to penetrate the hull without interfering with the current structure."

RMST said it would recover

artifacts from the debris field and "may recover free-standing objects inside the wreck." Those could include "objects from inside the Marconi room, but only if such objects are not affixed to the wreck itself."

The Marconi room holds the ship's radio a Marconi wireless telegraph machine which broadcast the Titanic's increasingly frantic distress signals after the ocean liner hit an iceberg. The messages in Morse code were picked up by other ships and onshore receiving stations, helping to save the lives of about 700 people who fled in life boats. There had been 2,208 passengers and crew on the Titanic's maiden voyage, from Southampton, England, to New York. "At this time, the company does not intend to cut into the wreck or detach any part of the wreck," RMST stated. The company said it would "work collaboratively" with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the U.S. agency that represents the public's interest in the wreck. □

# A village in Maine is again delaying a plan to build the world's tallest flagpole

**COLUMBIA FALLS, Maine (AP)** — Plans to build the world's tallest flagpole are being delayed — again. The tiny town of Columbia

Falls in Maine is extending its moratorium on big developments for another six months following a proposal for a flagpole taller than

the Empire State Building, with an observation deck and a flag larger than a football field. The planned attraction would also have an auditorium, living history museums and a monument.

Town officials said they lacked rules and regulations for such a large project.

The town of 485 residents began grappling with zoning regulations after Morrill Worcester proposed a structure stretching skyward some 1,461 feet (445 meters). Worcester's family operates a wreath-making company and founded the Wreaths Across America organization, which provides

holiday wreaths for military cemeteries.

Columbia Falls residents voted to adopt a six-month moratorium in March to give local officials time to draft regulations. The three-member Select Board voted unanimously Monday evening to continue the moratorium. Town officials are making progress on proposed ordinances during weekly public proceedings, said Jeff Greene, a Select Board member.

"The first 180 days weren't enough time to polish and complete this," he said. The Worcester family had no immediate comment on the additional six-month delay.

The proposal for the flagpole is meant to unite people through their love of the flag, recount the story of the U.S. through the eyes of veterans, and create jobs. For the Worcesters, the project was an extension of their patriotic enterprise, which includes producing more than 1 million balsam wreaths for veterans' grave makers each holiday season.

But instead, it created division in the community. Some residents said the scale of the proposal is so large that it would forever change a rural region known for its rocky coast, woodlands and blueberry barrens. □



The Pleasant River flows through Columbia Falls, Maine, April 27, 2023.

**Associated Press**



## Kim says N. Korea must be ready against U.S.-led invasion plots

By **HYUNG-JIN KIM**

**Associated Press**

**SEOUL, South Korea (AP)** —

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un called for the military to be constantly ready for combat to thwart its rivals' plots to invade, state media said Tuesday, as the U.S., South Korea and Japan held a trilateral naval exercise to deal with North Korea's evolving nuclear threats.

The U.S. and South Korean militaries have been separately holding summer bilateral exercises since last week. North Korea views such U.S.-involved training as an invasion rehearsal, though Washington and its partners maintain their drills are defensive.

Kim said in a speech marking the country's Navy Day on Monday that the waters off the Korean Peninsula have been made unstable "with the danger of a nuclear war" because of U.S.-led hostilities, according to the official Korean Central News Agency.

He accused the U.S. of conducting "more frantic" naval drills with its allies and deploying strategic assets



This photo provided on Tuesday, Aug. 29, 2023, by the North Korean government, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, center, visits the navy headquarter in North Korea, on Aug. 27, 2023.

**Associated Press**

in waters around the Korean Peninsula. Kim also cited a recent U.S.-South Korean-Japanese summit where an agreement to boost defense cooperation was reached to counter North Korea's nuclear program. Kim called U.S. President Joe Biden, South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol and Japanese Prime

Minister Fumio Kishida "the gang bosses" of the three countries.

"The prevailing situation requires our navy to put all its efforts into rounding off the war readiness to maintain the constant combat alertness and get prepared to break the enemy's will for war in contingency," Kim said. South Korea's Foreign

Ministry expressed deep regret over Kim's use of "very rude language" to slander the South Korean, U.S. and Japanese leaders. Spokesperson Lim Soosuk told reporters that North Korea must immediately stop acts that raise tensions with "reckless threats and provocation." In Washington, D.C., Cho Hyundong, South

Korea's ambassador to the United States, said South Korean, U.S. and Japanese efforts to improve relations would not be deterred by Kim's rhetoric.

"The continued provocation and continued violation of multiple critical U.N. security resolutions by North Korea will only strengthen the trilateral security cooperation," Cho said.

He made the comments Tuesday in an appearance at the Center for Strategic and International Studies with Tomita Koji, Japan's ambassador to the U.S., and Kurt Campbell, a top adviser to Biden on Indo-Pacific affairs.

Tuesday's South Korean-U.S.-Japanese drills in international waters off South Korea's southern Jeju island involved naval destroyers from the three countries. The training was aimed at mastering procedures for detecting, tracking and sharing information about incoming North Korean missiles, South Korea's navy said in a statement.

The U.S. and South Korean militaries began the 11-day bilateral drills on Aug. 21. □

## EU Commission president will propose Dutch foreign minister as successor for climate czar Timmermans

By **SAMUEL PETREQUIN**

**Associated Press**

**BRUSSELS (AP)** — The EU's top official said Tuesday she would nominate the

foreign minister of the Netherlands as the commissioner in charge of climate action to fill the void left by the departure of Frans Tim-

mermans, who resigned last week to run in the Dutch general election.

European Commission President Ursula Von der Leyen interviewed Wopke Hoekstra, who was named by the Dutch government as its preferred candidate to replace Timmermans. After their talks, she said he "showed strong motivation for the post and a great commitment to the European Union. He also has relevant professional experience for this post."

Timmermans, who was in charge of the European Green Deal climate initiative, quit to lead a center-left bloc into the Netherlands' November general election. Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte's ruling co-

alition proposed Hoekstra as a replacement. His appointment must now be formally approved by the European Parliament and the European Council of member states.

Von der Leyen said Hoekstra would be working under the leadership of Maros Sefcovic, the EU's new climate chief who took over as executive Vice-President for the Green Deal in addition to his other roles.

It remains to be seen how other EU nations and lawmakers will receive his candidacy. Hoekstra upset countries in southern Europe in 2020 with comments about their ability to fund a medical response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Portuguese Prime Minister

Antonio Costa called the comments "repugnant" at the time.

The fact that Hoekstra is also affiliated with the center-right Christian Democratic European People's Party, and not with the center-left socialists like Timmermans, could also create controversy.

"Appointing an EPP candidate to succeed a Social Democrat is extremely unsportsmanlike of Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte," The Left group said in a statement. "To resist the attempts of conservatives and the far-right to dilute climate policy, a strong supporter of the European Green Deal is needed, not a representative of the backlash coalition." □



Dutch Foreign Minister Wopke Hoekstra holds his headphones during joint press statements with French Foreign Minister Catherine Colonna and Romanian Foreign Minister Bogdan Aurescu in Bucharest, Romania, on Jan. 27, 2023.

**Associated Press**



## Guatemalan president calls for transition of power to anti-corruption crusader Arévalo

By **SONIA PÉREZ D. AND MEGAN JANETSKY** Associated Press **GUATEMALA CITY (AP)**

— Guatemalan President Alejandro Giammattei called Tuesday for a democratic transition of power to anti-corruption campaigner and president-elect Bernardo Arévalo and his Seed Movement party, which have faced waves legal attacks in attempts to invalidate his rise to power. The president's statement came after a night of political chaos in the Central American nation following one of its most tumultuous elections in recent history. Hours before the country's Supreme Electoral Tribunal certified late Monday that Arévalo won this month's presidential election, another government body the electoral registry suspended his party from all political activities. The Seed Movement asked the country's top electoral authority to lift the suspension. Arévalo called the suspension illegal at a news conference Monday and said that now the vote has been certified "no one can impede me from taking of-



**President-elect Bernardo Arevalo gives a press conference in Guatemala City, Monday, Aug. 28, 2023.**  
Associated Press

ice on Jan. 14."

Arévalo and his party, posing a threat to those keen on holding onto power, have faced a slew of legal challenges, allegations of irregularities and assassination plots, according to international observers.

Arévalo already appeared certain to take office as president in January, after

easily beating conservative former first lady Sandra Torres in the runoff. He got 60.9% of the votes, while she had 37.2%.

In a brief message to Guatemalans on Tuesday, Giammattei said he was satisfied for having put all the resources into making the electoral process peaceful. Despite accusa-

tions of voter fraud by Torres, the president said there were no "significant" incidents in the voting process. "Now the doors are open to an orderly, transparent and efficient government transition," Giammattei said.

Still, the suspension throws into doubt whether Seed Movement lawmakers can

take their 23 seats in Congress, and also underscores the uphill battle faced by Arévalo, who campaigned on a progressive and anti-corruption platform.

The Seed Movement requested that the suspension be nullified, basing its request on a June ruling by Guatemala's constitutional court holding that no political force can be suspended during an electoral period. It will be up to the the Supreme Electoral Tribunal to rule on the party's standing.

"We're basically entering really unexplored legal terrain," said Tiziano Breda, a Central America expert at Italy's Instituto Affari Internazionali. "But Arévalo's victory is very hard to overrule. I'm not sure they want to risk great international concern, a diplomatic crisis, or what it could imply socially, the unrest it could provoke."

He said he expects Arévalo's opponents to continue trying to hamstring other parts of his administration so as to make it as hard as possible for him to govern. □

## Massive Greek wildfire now in its 11th day is the biggest ever recorded in the EU

By **ELENA BECATOROS** Associated Press

**ATHENS, Greece (AP)** — A massive wildfire was burning unabated in northeastern Greece for the 11th day Tuesday despite the efforts of hundreds of firefighters and a fleet of water-dropping aircraft from Greece and several of its European Union partners.

After burning across vast tracts of land, the blaze in the Alexandroupolis and Evros region was mainly concentrated deep in a forest near the border with Turkey, in an area difficult to access.

The wildfire, which was blamed for 20 of the 21 wildfire-related deaths in Greece last week, is the

biggest in the EU since the European Forest Fire Information System started keeping records in 2000. Six planes and four heli-

copters were assisting 475 firefighters on the ground, backed by 100 vehicles, the fire department said. Another 260 firefighters and

one helicopter were tackling flare-ups of another major fire burning for days in a forest on the southern slopes of Mount Parnitha, on the fringes of the Greek capital.

Authorities are investigating the causes of the fires, which over the past week have destroyed large tracts of forest, scorched homes and triggered the evacuation of thousands of people.

In Athens, Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis chaired a government meeting on how to rehabilitate the burnt forests in Evros and Parnitha. It decided to identify all burned areas for reforestation, take action to prevent flooding later in

the year and provide access to food and water for the area's surviving wildlife. With firefighting forces stretched to the limit, Greece has called for help from other European countries, receiving 12 aircraft and hundreds of firefighters from across the continent. France and Spain were sending additional aircraft to join those already sent from Germany, Sweden, Croatia, Cyprus and the Czech Republic under the EU's emergency response mechanism.

More than 350 firefighters have also been sent to Greece from Romania, France, the Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Albania, Slovakia and Serbia. □



**A burned house stands in Acharnes suburb, on Mount Parnitha, in northwestern Athens, Greece, Sunday, Aug. 27, 2023.**

Associated Press



## Aruba: the legend behind its name

**(Oranjestad)—Most folkloric tales and legends in Aruba revolve around our indigenous ancestors, who came from mainland Venezuela, and discovered the island and made it into their new home. This particular legend tells the story of the birth of the Aruba name.**

The legend follows the life of Arua, an indigenous Cacique originally from Aroa in the Falcon state in Venezuela in the year 50 AD. Arua had a son around the year 70 AD with his wife Shira, who they named Corobori. When Corobori was old enough, he joined his father on the usual boat trip to the islands of Curacao and Bonaire to gather salt.

On their way back to Mainland Venezuela, they were caught up in a heavy rain storm—a side effect from a passing, but far away, hurricane. Of course, because of the lack of motors and sail, their boat was left in the mercy of the heavy winds. After a while, the storm started to pass, and the clouds began to clear up. Finally able to see around them, the Cacique spotted land approximately an hour away. So, they started to row in that direction until they reached the coast.

Once they arrived on what they thought was Venezuela, they decided to stay the night and fix their kayak. The next morning, the Cacique ordered his son and a few warriors to go find any sign of population in the area: "Corobori," Arua said. "Don't come back without news. It's in your hands how long we stay here till we find our family. So, if you need to take a week to gather information, we will wait for you."

"Don't worry," Corobori replied. "As soon as we have any information, we will let you know." Armed with arrows and spears, backpacks filled with food and water containers, they set off. They climbed several small hills, but no sign of a village. They crossed different dry riverbeds, but no sign of anything. When the sun finally descended, they found themselves near a fairly tall hill and decided to climb it for a better view of a village. This hill was called Pan Dushi or Orcuyo, which today we call Hooiberg.

The next morning, they could clearly see that they have landed on an island, but an unfamiliar one at that. When Corobori went back to where his father was waiting, he told him the news: "Father Arua, you have just discovered an island, but it is not Curacao or Bonaire. Far in the south, we saw the big mountains of our homeland Venezuela, which we could have never seen on the other island. This leads us to believe we are on a new island. But that's not all. When the sun came up, we saw in the distance a glowing plain, which we think may be salt."

The Cacique was pleased to hear of his son's findings. He decided to stay a couple days on the newly-discovered island in search for salt. The next morning they ascended Hooiberg again and stayed to see if they could find nearby smoke, indicating an inhabitant village. But they found nothing. So they went back to their initial arrival settlement, now known as Santo Largo in Savaneta. The next morning they hiked along the Spaans Lagoen near the Mangel Halto Beach and reached the area of Bushiri. There, they boarded their kayaks and heading to what we know now as Malmok, where they found rocks of salt. After a couple days of exploring the island and gathering some salt rocks, they left for Venezuela, where they were reunited with their families.

Throughout the year, they travelled back and forth to Aruba, collecting salt. After a while they settled on the island, generations of families living along the coast. Corobori was the first indigenous inhabitant in our history to explore the entirety of the island.

Arua, after decades as the leader of his tribe, spent his last days on the island. Having reached 80 years old, he called for his family on his death bed. In his hammock, he said: "My children, many years have passed, and I've asked my warrior to bring me back to the island so I can laid to rest. The God of living has given me the gift of life to see my son, grandchildren and great grandchildren. But now he is calling me home. Corobori, my torch is now passed to you. Guide our people, and be the leader you were always meant to become. If one day you leave my island, do not forget that it is also yours. This is my last wish: When I die, bury me in our maize plantation."

And so when the Cacique passed away, his wishes were granted and he was laid to rest in the area we now know as the Paradera Cemetery. Where he used to live, they built the Paradera Church.

And that is the tale of what inspired the Aruba name. In the generations that lived or travelled back and forth to the island, there were many familiar names\*, like Guadiriki, a warrior who was there when the island got discovered and his son, whom he called Huliba; Corobori and his children, Corodori, Camacuri and Turibana, Masiduri; and Malmok, the 13-year-old boy who alerted the Cacique when the Caribes attacked.

Familiar names: all these names are familiar to Arubans, as these are the names of places and plants on the island. □

**Source: Un storia di e Indjan Arua (A story of the Indian Arua) by Adolf (Dufi) Kock**





## Po-kè Ono - A Taste of Asia with a Twist: Exploring Flavorful Fusion



Amidst the vibrant paradise of Aruba, where turquoise waters meet golden sands, a culinary gem awaits: Po-kè Ono, the coolest Asian fusion spot that will whisk you away on an exotic flavor adventure. Experience an explosion of Asian tastes like never before led by the creative genius of Chef Urvin Croes, the mastermind behind Aruba's acclaimed Infini restaurant. Po-kè Ono serves up an enticing menu that blends traditional Asian flavors with modern twists, all within a cheery ambiance that exudes warmth and tropical charm.

At Po-kè Ono, diners can savor an array of flavors from the new menu items that stand out for their artful presentation and delectable taste. One of the highlights is the traditional Vietnamese Pho, a soul-soothing soup consisting of bone broth, rice noodles, succulent thinly sliced meat, fresh herbs, and zesty spices, making it an explosion of taste in every spoonful.

Another must-try dish is The Elvis Presley Bao, a playful homage to the King of Rock 'n' Roll. This fun creation features fried spam with sweet teriyaki, peanut sauce,

crispy fried plantains, crisp lettuce, red onions, and a spicy kick from the Kewpie mayo. The combination of sweet, savory, and spicy flavors is a harmony that leaves guests coming back for more.

If you're craving a delicious fusion of Indonesian and Hawaiian influences, the Babi Sate Poke hits all the right notes. Indonesian-style pork skewers are served with rich peanut sauce, crunchy crispy onions, pickled cucumber, and creamy avocado, resulting in a medley of textures and flavors that captivate the palate.

Beyond the flavors, Po-kè Ono impresses with its thoughtfully curated ambiance that reflects the Asian fusion theme. With two locations in Renaissance Marketplace and the lobby of Azure Residence, the restaurant exudes a tropical and laid-back vibe, inviting guests to unwind and indulge in a delightful dining experience. The use of fun cocktail glasses and relaxed decor further enhances the sense of pleasure, making every visit a memorable one.

Get ready for double the fun at Po-kè Ono with their awesome two-for-one happy hour. From 4 pm to 6 pm, this fantastic deal lets you dive into selected items at an incredible value. It's the perfect opportunity to try out their fresh new menu while sipping on delightful beverages.

Meet the culinary maestro, Chef Urvin Croes, the creative force behind Po-kè Ono and Infini. With an unyielding passion for Asian cuisine, rooted in his Chinese heritage, he sprinkles his magic on every plate at Po-kè Ono, crafting innovative and artfully delicious dishes. Having honed his skills in top-notch hotel restaurants and even snatching the title of 'Iron Chef Aruba's first winner,' Chef Urvin's culinary expertise shines through in every mouthwatering bite.

Promoting Aruba as a culinary destination, Chef Urvin sources ingredients locally whenever possible, supporting farmers who share his passion for qual-



ity produce. The result is a menu that expertly balances traditional recipes with modern techniques, elevating every dish to new heights. His love for food and the cultural stories behind each creation are evident in the passionate manner in which he prepares and presents his dishes.

Notably, Po-kè Ono has earned its well-deserved reputation as the number one restaurant on Tripadvisor Palm Beach, a testament to its success and popularity among locals and tourists alike.

Po-kè Ono is like a treasure trove of Asian fusion delights, all crafted with love and expertise by the one and only Chef Urvin Croes. You'll be treated to an array of dishes, from Pho to inventive Bao creations, each artfully presented. The relaxed ambiance and awesome two-for-one happy hour make dining here an absolute pleasure. Once you've tasted the magic of Po-kè Ono, you'll be coming back for more!

So, what are you waiting for? Dive in and indulge in this captivating world of Asian-inspired goodness! □

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Auntie Anne's Pretzels

## Aruba's most family-friendly beaches

(Oranjestad)—One of the biggest concerns that parents have when travelling with their children is a guarantee of their safety and healthy enjoyment. Therefore, we thought it would be a great help to travelling parents to list off some the most family-friendly beaches around the island.

**Baby Beach in San Nicolas**

Baby Beach is one Aruba's most popular and visited beaches, and for good reason: This sandy and quiet lagoon is a great place for parents to sit back and relax while their children play in the shallow shores of the beach. Beside the relaxing

atmosphere, there are also several services that may accommodate your stay, like a parking lot, sun tent rentals, chairs, bathrooms and a snack bar right at the far left of the beach.

**Mangel Halto in Pos Chiquito**

Mangel Halto is situated in the back streets of the Pos Chiquito city. Though there are several stairs on the sides of the beach cliff leading you down, the best spot for families to hang out is across the bridge, passed the mangrove trees near the entrance sign. Here, there are small and big palapas, perfect for big and small families to set up their belongings.

In this area, the shore is also shallow, falling right around your knee before slowly getting deeper: perfect for kids to safely play.

**Eagle Beach/Palm Beach in the hotel area**

Yet another highly popular beach site, Eagle Beach and Palm Beach is where most of our visitors go to tan, swim or play in the white sand. Because they are near the low-rise and high-rise hotel areas, these beaches are the most accessible for visitors on foot. These beaches also offer many palapas free to use, but you can also rent chairs and tents. Much like Baby Beach, these sites are



one of the best beaches for your children to play and build sand castles.

as this area is filled with little fish and corals, even close to the shore.

**Boca Catalina in Malmok**

Boca Catalina is a small bay beach near the Malmok beach area further down the hotel areas. Though it may not be a very sandy beach, it is relatively quiet and tranquil. This is a great place for family to lay down a big blanket and have a little picnic. This is also one of the best places to snorkel,

**Palm Island**

Ok, this one is technically not a beach, but a must-visit attraction for family fun. This small water park oasis is located further down the Mangel Halto Beach and is reachable by boat. This water park offers 6 hours of fun activities, food, drinks, and a chance to see pink flamingoes up close! ☐

## Aruba to me

**ORANJESTAD — You are back and we would like to portrait you! By inviting you to send us your favorite vacation picture while enjoying our Happy Island.**

Complete the sentence: Aruba to me is ..... Send your picture with that text (including your name and where you are from) to: [news@arubatoday.com](mailto:news@arubatoday.com) and we will publish

your vacation memory. Isn't that a special way to keep your best moments alive? Please do note: By submitting photos, text or any other materials, you give permission to

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Last but not least: check out our website, Instagram and Facebook page! Thank you for supporting our free newspaper, we strive to make you a happy reader every day again.

For today we received a lovely message from **Essie and Preston Crawford** from Euless, Texas.

She wrote to us saying: "Aruba to us is celebrating with friends in our happy place..ARUBA..."

Thank you for sending us this wonderful message sharing what Aruba means to you with us and our readers! ☐







Article by Etnia Nativa

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Etnia Nativa is close to high rise Hotels



## Island's Jewish community

Episode CCXXI - 221

**Etnia Nativa is where to connect with the mystical aspects of Aruba, its culture, and traditional heritage. The platform which encourage visitors to engage with our island's unique cultural setting.**

Aruba has a long-standing human history that goes back thousands of years and has, since the colonial era received the contributions of many nations. Like with the arrival of people from the Israeli community in this region, which started very early, during the age of conquest. Sephardim craftsmen and cartographers from Spain and Portugal were part of the crews of many expeditions. Contact, influxes, and refluxes of Jewish immigrants, settlers, and citizens date back at least to the sixteenth century, even before the arrival of the Dutch. The turn of events surrounding these new islanders, has built a truly divergent Aruban Jewish community.

There is an old Jewish cemetery preserved in Oranjestad, with some tombs dating back to 1563. Since the 17th century, but surely during the 19th century, the Aruba Jewish community has remained relatively small. However, during the Holocaust and after a notable influx of North European Jews immigrants settled on Aruba, they eventually organized a community center and later a synagogue. Over time, many of the descendants moved to the U.S. but new migrations of Jews families continue to arrive. The history of this community in Aruba dates back to the 16th century, when the first Jewish immigrants began to arrive. Most were Iberian Sephardic Jews arriving from the Netherlands. The first representative of this community to officially settle in Aruba was a Portuguese descendant who belonged to a prominent Jewish family from Curaçao. He worked for the Dutch West Indian Company; Moshe Shlomon Levie Maduro. Moises came to Aruba with his family in 1754; after his arrival, several other members followed. Moshe Maduro is considered the patriarch of all the Aruban Maduro



and including Maduro the present-day Venezuelan President.

From 1924 on, more Jewish immigrants arrived from Eastern Europe, Suriname, and the Netherlands. In 1942, the community created the Jewish Country Club on Palm Beach. This center was utilized for such life-cycle events as weddings and bar/bat mitzvahs. By 1946, the Jewish Country Club was officially recognized in Aruba as a center for worship, Hebrew school, and social events. It was officially recognized by the Dutch Kingdom in 1956. Years later, in 1962, the Beth Israel synagogue located in Oranjestad was consecrated.

Although the Jewish Community of Aruba is made up of many streams of immigrants who came from different parts of the world, they are living a fully integrated and harmonious life with a total absence of anti-Semitism or any other kind of discrimination. Our island also has a constant flow of tourists who visit the community, participate in various religious functions such as Kabbat

at Shabbat and the Pesaj Seder, and fully enjoy the island as well as its products that are offered in supermarkets. In addition to regular services, including Havdalah, the community offers various ongoing programs and projects, such as Hebrew, Talmud, and Kabbalah classes; the Yitro Project, which teaches and encourages people to light Shabbat candles at home; and the Hosea Project, which studies the traditions of tallit, tefillin, and mezuzah. There are also meeting nights followed by a discussion, monthly Shabbat potlucks after the service, and social action programs such as food and clothing drives for the holiday season. The small cemetery in Oranjestad city, recently maintained with the moral support of Etnia Nativa, serves as testimony to the Jewish long presence on our island centuries ago. This cemetery contains eight aboveground vaults with gravestones dating from 1563, with the names on the gravestones almost erased by time, dating almost a century before the first Jewish settlement on Curacao, our neighboring and sister island. However, regular use of the cemetery did not begin until 1837. Today, Aruba has its own Jewish cemetery; however, most Aruban-born Jews were buried in those bygone days in Curacao, from where they maintained their commerce with the outside world.

If you are keen to explore Aruba's deep heritage, Etnia Nativa is a place to connect. A private residential, a house which integrates natural and reused materials, bursting with art, culture, and island heritage. Each visitor is guided through an authentic encounter with owner-builder and cultural expert.

Appointment Info: WhatsApp message at +297 592 2702. [etnianativa03@gmail.com](mailto:etnianativa03@gmail.com)





## Did you know about... Basic driving rules on Aruba (part 1)

(Oranjestad)—Have you ever felt confused when you're driving on the highways or backstreets of Aruba? Then we present a simple guide to some of the basic rules of Aruban traffic, along with some tips for things to look out for.

### Speed limit

Legally, the speed limit on the four-lane highways is 80 km/h. This speed limit also counts for the main roads that are connected to the highways. The minimum speed is 50 km/h. Most people drive around 60 km/h on the main roads and about 70 km/h on the highways. There are also areas that indicate a speed limit on a sign; these are usually around populated and school areas.

The four-lane highways contain the left-lane, also known as the "fast" lane for each direction. Here is where vehicles can drive up to the maximum speed. However, legally it is not permitted to drive for long periods of time on the left lane. This lane is primarily designed for drivers to switch lanes before a roundabout, for example, if your exit on the roundabout is on your far left. The general lane to drive in—both at maximum and minimum speed—is on the right lane.



### Roundabouts

Speaking of roundabouts, it is important to know where you have to enter and drive on the roundabout to make your exit. A good rule of thumb is to count the exits starting from your right side. So, exit 1 would be on your right; exit 2 would be straight ahead; exit 3 would be on your far left and exit 4 would lead to the road paralleled to the one you're on, heading in the other direction.

Most roundabouts have these 4 exits, so they are relatively simple. When you're driving on the four-lane highway, it is important to know when to switch to the left lane to make your

exit: if your exit is on your far left (exit 3), then you need to switch to the left lane on the high way before nearing the roundabout so you can take the path that leads you directly to your exit. If your exit is on your right or if you're going straight ahead, you can keep driving in the right lane of the highway.

It's also important to know that vehicles about to enter the roundabout must yield to those already on it. A good rule of thumb is to look out if someone is coming from your left side.

However, other roundabouts can be quite tricky to navigate...

### Watty Vos Boulevard (the "paperclip" roundabout)

Probably the biggest roundabout on the island, the "paperclip" roundabout on the Watty Vos Boulevard is one of the trickier roundabouts that could—and has—caused confused among both tourists and locals. However, once you take a good look at it, it's fairly simple. The basis is just the same as a regular roundabout (left exit? left lane! etc.), but instead of having four different exits like on a regular roundabout, now you have two extra; one on the right and the other on the left side of the roundabout. The rules don't change at all, you just have to keep an extra eye open.

### Airport roundabout

Ah, yes. The infamous airport roundabout. The favorite roundabout amongst local, because of its easy (hard) lanes that never (always) cause confusion among drivers. Sarcasm aside, this roundabout can be tricky to enter, especially when you're driving from the direction of the airport heading. When you're driving away from the airport reaching the roundabout, you'll be faced with three lanes. The far right lane is to take the exit 1 out heading east (right lane of highway). The middle exit is

used for exit 1 (left lane of highway), 2 and 3. The far left exit is used to only exit on exit 3 (left lane of highway) and 4.

### "Las Americas" roundabout

The Las Americas roundabout is located near the Talk of the Town hotel, west from the airport roundabout. This roundabout may look like a regular roundabout—and for the most part, it is. However, when you are driving from the east going in the direction of town, please take note that there are two exits on your right.

When you're driving towards this roundabout, you'll notice that the road becomes wider, splitting into two lanes. The right lane is used to take the first and second exit on the right. If you want to exit straight ahead, you must drive on the left lane!

It's always scary to drive in new places where the traffic may look and work differently, but once you get it right once, you'll get the hang of it in no time. Additionally, all roundabouts and roads on Aruba have signs and arrows painted on the road to help guide you. So take your time, keep your eyes open and don't forget to wear a seat belt! □





# CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

## ACROSS

- 46 Tribe symbols  
1 Military awards  
7 Midmonth day  
11 Broad street  
12 Fish feature  
13 "Wasn't me," e.g.  
14 Like an eyesore  
15 Mideast ruler  
17 Acid's opposite  
20 Fathom and foot  
23 Yale rooster  
24 "30 Rock" star  
26 Easter find  
27 Stunning serve  
28 Travel stop  
29 Snarls  
31 PC key  
32 Paris river  
33 Applies  
34 Connect  
37 Recipe instruction  
39 Thrill  
43 Shoe part  
44 Encourage  
45 Relaxed

## DOWN

- 1 Seething  
2 Genesis name  
3 Comfy room  
4 Biscotti flavor  
5 Hawaiian do  
6 Hawk  
7 Large lizard  
8 Ennobles  
9 Wing  
10 Devious  
16 Melodies  
17 Borscht base  
18 Pond growth  
19 Indicates  
21 Past, present, or future  
22 Matches up, as  
24 Yarns  
25 Glacier makeup  
30 Great, in surf slang  
33 Free of censorship  
35 Trial  
36 Trade fair  
37 That woman  
38 Caffeine source  
40 Fury  
41 Football's Brady  
42 USN rank

A	B	A	C	K	A	G	I	L	E
X	E	N	O	N	N	A	V	A	L
L	A	N	D	I	N	G	P	A	D
E	R	A	V	I	E	N	Y	E	
			F	E	L	L	S		
G	A	L	A	S		S	Q	U	A
A	T	O	Z			U	R	G	E
S	E	W	E	R		J	A	N	E
			D	E	B	I	T		
O	L	D		S	A	G		L	E
H	E	A	T	I	N	G	P	A	D
N	A	M	E	S		L	I	B	E
O	N	S	E	T		Y	E	S	N

## Yesterday's answer

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11							12		
13							14		
			15			16			
17	18	19				20		21	22
23				24	25				
26				27			28		
29			30				31		
32							33		
		34			35	36			
37	38				39		40	41	42
43					44				
45					46				

A X Y D I B A A X R  
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

8-30

## CRYPTOQUOTE

H Y I T Y M N C G S G P F G

I L P C G U Y M N V P L G N L Y M I Y

Y C L G T Z K F M N N A T . — M N H G B

TY C V S N

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: DON'T LET YESTERDAY USE UP TOO MUCH OF TODAY. — WILL ROGERS

# How to get comfortable with taking smart financial risks



A tip box is filled with U.S. currency in New York, April 3, 2019. Associated Press

By KIMBERLY PALMER of NerdWallet

Making money, whether by putting cash into the stock market, buying a home or jumping to a better-paying job, requires some degree of risk. While embracing any of those moves might feel as scary as skydiving off a cliff, there are times when a little risk makes financial sense.

"In certain scenarios, not taking enough risk is actually a bigger risk," says Liz Davidson, CEO and founder of Financial Finesse, which provides workplace financial wellness programs as an employer benefit.

Davidson and other financial experts also caution against being overly risky with your finances. How to find the right level of financial risk for you is highly personal; there's no formula that can tell you whether or not to buy that house or take that new job. But there are ways to get more comfortable with risk when you know that taking the less comfortable path is the right decision for you.

Here are five strategies to help you embrace financial risks that make sense

for you.

## UNDERSTAND AND ADDRESS YOUR FEARS

"When we think about making financial decisions, fear is a natural emotional component because with money, there are really high stakes," says Farnoosh Torabi, creator of the "So Money" podcast and author of the forthcoming book "A Healthy State of Panic: Follow Your Fears to Build Wealth, Crush Your Career and Win at Life."

"When fear shows up in your financial life, ask: 'Where did you come from, and what do you want me to protect?'" she suggests. Torabi applied that method when she made the risky decision to buy a new home at the height of the pandemic in spring 2020. "I was scared. It was either going to be the best decision or the worst decision. But I was more afraid of standing still and not doing anything," she says. Sometimes, the fear of risk is warranted. Communities of color can face particular challenges when considering financial risks, says Yemi Rose, CEO and founder of OfColor, a financial well-

ness startup that serves employees of color. "We don't have the luxury to take as many risks because we don't have a safety net to fall back on," he says.

Investing, entrepreneurship and homeownership are all riskier without significant savings to turn to if things don't go as planned, he adds. Sometimes, it makes sense to proceed anyway. He urges people to consider paying off debt and building up savings to give themselves more stability while still taking smart risks.

## BUILD A BIGGER EMERGENCY FUND

In fact, building up a bigger savings account is one of the most powerful ways you can protect yourself from the risks you decide to embrace, Davidson says. "To have cash in the bank does multiple things. It psychologically gives you a sense of peace, freedom and options," she explains. It will also help you cover basic needs if you fall on hard times, she adds.

While financial advisers generally recommend saving three to six months of expenses, Pamela Capalad, a certified financial planner and the founder of Brunch & Budget, a financial planning firm in the Brooklyn borough of New York City, says you can alter your target savings goal based on the stability of your job, whether you have dependents and other factors.

## UPLEVEL YOUR FINANCIAL KNOWLEDGE

"The best way to avoid stress and confusion is to become more knowledgeable. When you're more knowledgeable, you'll feel more confident. Take some time to learn and understand the basics" about investing, home value trends and other topics that relate to your upcoming financial decisions, says Carol Petrov, a certified financial planner and vice president of Kendall Capital Management, a financial firm in Rockville, Maryland. □

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24/7



## Rare blue supermoon brightens the night sky this week in the closest full moon of the year

By **MARCIA DUNN**  
**AP Aerospace Writer**  
**CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla.**

**(AP)** — Stargazers are in for a double treat this week: a rare blue supermoon with Saturn peeking from behind.

The cosmic curtain rises Wednesday night with the second full moon of the month, the reason it's considered blue.

It's dubbed a supermoon because it's closer to Earth than usual, appearing especially big and bright.

This will be the closest full moon of the year, just 222,043 miles (357,344 kilometers) or so away. That's more than 100 miles (160 kilometers) closer than the Aug. 1 supermoon.

As a bonus, Saturn will be visible as a bright point 5 degrees to the upper right of the moon at sunset in the east-southeastern sky, according to NASA. The ringed planet will appear to circle clockwise around the moon as the night wears on.

If you missed the month's first spectacle, better catch this one.

There won't be another blue supermoon until 2037, according to Italian astronomer Gianluca Masi, founder of the Virtual Telescope Project.

Clouds spoiled Masi's attempt to livestream the supermoon rising earlier this month. □

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#### Women in Difficulties

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Sta. Cruz	527 2900
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Fire Dept.	115
Red Cross	582 2219

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Jet Blue	588 2244
Surinam	582 7896

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Child Abuse Prevention  
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Quota Club Tel. 525 2672

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# Why you can't get 'Planet of the Bass' out of your head

By **MARIA SHERMAN**  
AP Music Writer

**LOS ANGELES (AP)** — The year is 2023, but it might as well be 1997.

One of the great viral hits of the moment is DJ Crazy Times and Ms. Biljana Electronica's "Planet of the Bass," a parody song pulled straight from the absurdity of late '90s, early '00s Eurodance music. Think Eiffel 65's "Blue (Da Ba Dee)," or Crazy Frog's "Axel F." At the time of writing, the various versions of his song have surpassed over 250 million combined views across social platforms.

Confused? You're not alone.

Who are DJ Crazy Times and Ms. Biljana Electronica?

A clip of the viral tune which features hilarious lyrics like "Life, it never die / Women are my favorite guy" began to circulate in late July after comedian Kyle Gordon posted it on social media. The 50-second video, titled "Every European Dance Song in the 1990's" and set inside the World Trade Center's Oculus, featured a flame-haired emcee, DJ Crazy Times, alongside a woman with crimped blonde hair: Ms. Biljana Electronica, herself.

In reality, "DJ Crazy Times" dressed in his signature black vest and baggy pants was Gordon, who first developed the character in his college a cappella group as a David Guetta-esque DJ. He's since evolved into "this weird, horny Latvian guy rapping," as Gordon describes it. And while "Ms. Biljana Electronica" was played onscreen by content creator Audrey Trullinger, she was voiced by singer-songwriter Chrissi Poland.

"It's the only session I've ever done in my whole career where I had to keep stopping as I was laughing so hard at the lyrics," Poland says.

Poland doesn't appear in any of the four videos for the song, an intentional de-



This image released by BMG shows a scene from the music video "Planet of the Bass," by DJ Crazy Times, feat. Ms. Biljana Electronica.

cision satirizing Eurodance music videos where "they would just have these female vocalists sing tracks in the studio and then put models in," she says.

"It was always meant to be a parody of this trope," Gordon says. "Black Box's 'Ride on Time' is another example the song would be a hit, and then they would shamelessly put in models or actresses in the video."

To some fans' dismay, Trullinger was replaced in a second clip featuring the same audio by influencer Mara Olney, and then in a third clip by comedian Sabrina Brier. But she assumed her role as the original "Ms. Biljana Electronica" in the official music video for the song, released earlier this month.

Gordon says it has been "awesome to see this whole saga play out," as "people argue over what the bit is" and root for their favorite version of Ms. Biljana Electronica. "To sort of see if slowly unfold and dawn on people, I think, was pretty funny."

Why did 'Planet of the Bass' blow up?

Gordon chalks up the success of "Planet of the Bass" to a few different causes: there's nostalgia for this music, of course, but the timing was fortuitous.

The first clip hit TikTok around the tail end of the promotion cycle for the "Barbie" movie, which brought newfound attention to the 1997 hit "Barbie Girl," by Danish-Norwegian Europop band Aqua.

"Eurodance generally might be in the zeitgeist," Gordon says.

He adds that because his DJ Crazy Times character had evolved over the last decade, he didn't feel like he was quick to jump on a trend, rather, that it was "just luck, that it timed out with where this song came out in the life of the 'Barbie' movie."

So, why do we love 'Planet of the Bass'?

Nate Sloan, a musicologist and assistant professor at the USC Thornton School of Music, said that upon first listen, "Planet of the Bass" straddled the line between parody and sincerity. Until DJ Crazy Times' verse.

"Once he said, 'Women are my favorite guy,' I

knew it was a joke," says Sloan, who also co-hosts the "Switched On Pop" podcast.

The reason for any confusion is because, well, the song does demonstrate a deep understanding of the music it pulls from source material that was already playful and less self-serious than other pop music forms.

"Aqua is perhaps the most obvious antecedent for the song," Sloan says.

"Musically, it doesn't sound a lot like a song of theirs say, 'Barbie Girl.' But it seems to be paying homage."

"One thing I love is the interplay between the male and female singer," he adds. "In a song like 'Barbie Girl,' they are constantly going back and forth. In 'Planet of the Bass,' DJ Crazy Times is giving little interjections at the end of each of Ms. Biljana Electronica's lyrics."

He cites a theory first posited by music journalist John Seabrook, which suggests that European and in particular, Swedish songwriters were so effective in the late 1990s and early 2000s because they focused

on the sounds of words as opposed to their explicit meaning.

"Maybe counterintuitively, it made those songs more successful," Sloan says. "The assonance of it, the rhyme of it feels really good. So maybe having an emphasis more on the sound of the words than the meaning is actually part of what makes this genre compelling." (For his part, Gordon acknowledges he pulled from that music, but also cites "the butchering of the English language" inherent in '80s Italo-disco as a formative lyrical influence.)

There's also the music itself of "Planet of the Bass," which Sloan defines as fast and syncopated, with elongated melodies bordering on operatic which, considering the humor of the song, makes for an amusing tension.

Are pop parody songs having a moment?

There's an argument to be made that mimicked music come and go in waves. In 2023, "Planet of the Bass" might not feel too dissimilar from, say, the parodic Lily-Rose Depp's "World Class Sinner I'm A Freak," from "The Idol" which uses the same chord progression and is recorded in the same key as The Weeknd's "Can't Feel My Face."

Parody songs, Sloan theorizes, inspire moments of virality not only for their musical qualities, but because they are tied to a strong visual.

"There's a continuum from 'Planet of the Bass,' to 'World Class Sinner' to 'What Does the Fox Say' to 'Gangnam Style,'" he says and with the exception of "Gangnam Style," few linger as hooks in the cultural imagination.

"I'm skeptical these songs have longevity as musical material than comedic, audio-visual sketches," Sloan says.

But perhaps longevity is antonymic to virality these songs are a lot of fun even if for a short amount of time. □



# U.S. Ryder Cup team adds familiar picks with Fowler and Thomas

By DOUG FERGUSON  
AP Golf Writer

U.S. captain Zach Johnson wasn't about to go to Rome for the Ryder Cup without Justin Thomas. And he made it sound as though Brooks Koepka was just as easy a decision.

They were among six captain's picks announced Tuesday to fill out a 12-man American team that will try to end three decades of losing on European soil, all while setting up Johnson for the usual dose of second-guessing if it all goes wrong. The Ryder Cup is Sept. 29 to Oct. 1 at Marco Simone outside Rome. Europe's team will not be determined until after this week. Thomas is regarded by players on both sides as the emotional spark for the U.S. team in the Ryder Cup, beyond his 6-2-1 record in two previous appearances. But he has gone 15 months without winning, and he played so poorly this year that he didn't even finish among the top 70 who reached the FedEx Cup postseason.

"He has without question been the heart and soul of Team USA," Johnson said. "In my mind, he was born for this. You just don't leave JT at home."

Thomas said he had trouble sleeping in the days leading up to the phone call, and then he couldn't sleep after he was picked because of his excitement. "I'm very, very fortunate to



Rickie Fowler, of the U.S., plays out of a bunker on the 10th during a foursome match on the opening day of the 42nd Ryder Cup at Le Golf National in Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines, outside Paris, France, Friday, Sept. 28, 2018.

Associated Press

be here," Thomas said. Koepka was knocked out of the six automatic qualifiers in the final week. No one would have thought twice about his selection as the PGA Championship winner and a Masters runner-up, except that he's part of Saudi-backed LIV Golf and its 54-hole events and 48-man fields. Turns out that wasn't an issue. "It was a pretty easy pick," Johnson said. "He's built in my mind for the biggest of stages, and there's no bigger stage than the Ryder Cup," Johnson said from the PGA of America's new headquarters in Frisco, Texas. The other four picks were

Jordan Spieth and Collin Morikawa, both part of the U.S. rout over Europe in 2021 at Whistling Straits, along with Rickie Fowler and Sam Burns, the only Ryder Cup rookie among the six picks. The six qualifiers were Scottie Scheffler, U.S. Open champion Wyndham Clark, British Open champion Brian Harman, Patrick Cantlay, Max Homa and Xander Schauffele. Left off the team were Cameron Young, who has finished in the top 10 in four of the last seven majors and was No. 9 in the Ryder Cup standings; Keegan Bradley (No. 11), a two-time winner this season who has played in two Ryder Cups; and Lu-

cas Glover, one of the hottest players in golf with two victories over the last four weeks.

That led to speculation over how much the buddy system played a role. Spieth and Thomas have been best friends since they were 14 and have compiled a strong partnership in the Ryder Cup and Presidents Cup 8-2-0, most notable a 3-1 mark before a hostile crowd in France in 2018. Burns is best friends with Scheffler and finished 12th in the Ryder Cup standings, his only win this year in the Dell Match Play over Young. He missed the cut in two of the four majors. He and Scheffler were

0-2-1 as partners in the Presidents Cup last year.

Fowler pulled himself out of a deep slump by winning the Rocket Mortgage Classic.

One of the most likeable players in golf, he is close friends with Spieth, Thomas and practically everybody else. He was 13th in the Ryder Cup standings, and while this will be his fifth Ryder Cup team, it was his third time relying on a captain's pick. His Ryder Cup record is 3-7-5.

Fowler didn't win his first match until his third Ryder Cup appearance.

Johnson said the six automatic qualifiers had some ownership in the team and contributed to the discussion on the six picks, the last meeting a week ago in Atlanta during the Tour Championship. He made it sound as though the choices had been set.

"I think the elements in which I've mentioned before team room, camaraderie, guys getting along, wanting to be with each other, course fit, experience all of those factors and what the top six are leaning on, those factors weighed heavier than I would say the last two weeks of competition," Johnson said.

The American team will have four Ryder Cup rookies Clark, Harman, Homa and Burns and four players who have played a Ryder Cup overseas. □



New York Yankees' Josh Donaldson walks to the dugout after being called out on strikes against the Oakland Athletics during the seventh inning of a baseball game in Oakland, Calif., Tuesday, June 27, 2023.

Associated Press

## Former AL MVP Josh Donaldson released by Yankees

**DETROIT (AP)** — Third baseman Josh Donaldson's unproductive two seasons with the New York Yankees ended Tuesday when the former AL MVP was released.

The 37-year-old hit .207 with 25 homers and 77 RBIs over 165 games in two seasons since he was acquired from Minnesota in March 2022 along with infielder/outfielder Isiah Kiner-Falefa and catcher Ben Rortvedt for catcher Gary Sánchez and infielder Gio Urshela. Donaldson played in just 33 games this season. The three-time All-Star was on the injured list from April 5 to June 2 because of a strained right hamstring, then went back on the IL on July 16 with a strained right calf sustained while running out a grounder. He was moved four days later to the 60-day IL.

Donaldson hit .142 with 15 RBIs this year. Ten of his 15 hits were home runs. In his first season with the Yankees, he batted .222 with 15 homers and 62 RBIs.

New York is responsible for the \$3,838,710 Donaldson is owed from a \$21 million salary in the final guaranteed season of a \$92 million, four-year contract he signed with Minnesota. New York also owes a \$6 million buyout attached to a \$24 million mutual option for 2024. □



# Safety Damar Hamlin makes the 53-player cut after Bills pare roster

By **JOHN WAWROW**  
AP Sports Writer  
ORCHARD PARK, N.Y. (AP)

— Buffalo Bills safety Damar Hamlin made the cut, a person with direct knowledge of the decision confirmed to The Associated Press on Tuesday.

The person spoke on the condition of anonymity because the Bills have not announced their final cuts in paring their roster to 53 players. The NFL Network first reported the news regarding Hamlin, whose bid to resume his football career approaches completion after his near-death experience during a game at Cincinnati in January.

Though general manager Brandon Beane has stressed changes could still be made to the roster before the Bills open their season at the New York Jets on Sept. 11, what's undeniable is the courage Hamlin has shown in reaching this milestone of his comeback by reclaiming a backup role behind starters Micah Hyde and Jordan Poyer.



Buffalo Bills safety Damar Hamlin (3) plays in an NFL preseason football game against the Pittsburgh Steelers in Pittsburgh, Sunday, Aug. 20, 2023.

Associated Press

What began as a national theme of "Prayers For Hamlin" has turned to praise for Hamlin, who put aside hints of trepidation in each step of his recovery. It's a journey that's taken the 25-year-old from being placed in a medically induced coma

after going into cardiac arrest and needing to be resuscitated on the field, to returning to the turf to take and deliver hits at full speed during practice and three preseason game appearances in one of North America's most violent pro-

fessional sport.

"I made the choice that I wanted to play, you know, it wasn't nobody else's choice but mine," Hamlin said of his approach after a three-tackle outing in Buffalo's preseason-opening win against Indianapolis three

weeks ago. "So, when you see my cleats laced up and my helmet and shoulder pads on, there ain't gonna be no hesitation."

A week later in his hometown of Pittsburgh, Hamlin was selected to take the field as a captain for the coin flip before the Bills' game against the Steelers. "It was real special, like a moment of serendipity, just like life coming full circle for me," he said following the game in which finished with three more tackles. "It's just something indescribable." Overall, Hamlin finished the preseason with nine solo tackles and one assist while playing 80 defensive snaps and 19 more on special teams.

Coach Sean McDermott all but assured Hamlin's place on the roster was secure two weeks ago by saying the player had little more to prove.

"From my non-medical standpoint, I think he's checked all the boxes as far as that goes," McDermott said. □

# Fred Warner claims the top spot in AP's NFL linebacker rankings

By **JOSH DUBOW**  
AP Pro Football Writer

The job of an off-ball linebacker has perhaps never been harder in the NFL. Players need to be adept at stopping the run for defenses that are focusing most of their resources on defending the pass and not be liabilities when they are caught in coverage. No linebacker pulls off that trick better than Fred Warner, whose versatility helped anchor San Francisco's top-ranked defense a year ago and made him the unanimous choice by The Associated Press for the top spot among off-ball linebackers.

A panel of nine AP Pro Football Writers ranked the top five players at off-ball linebacker, making their selections based on current status entering the 2023 season. Outside linebackers who typically rush the

passer were included with edge rushers instead of linebackers.

First-place votes were worth 10 points. Second through fifth-place votes were worth 5, 3, 2 and 1 points.

Lavonte David got three second-place votes and

was the only other player included on all nine ballots to earn a second-place finish. Roquan Smith got four second-place votes and came in third, Demario Davis got one second-place vote and came in fourth with Matt Milano fifth.

Bobby Wagner got the

other second-place vote. Shaq Leonard, Dre Greenlaw, C.J. Mosley and T.J. Edwards also got votes.

**1. FRED WARNER**, San Francisco 49ers: Warner has been the lynchpin of the Niners defense since arriving in 2018. Warner is stout against the run and can defend wide receivers deep downfield like he famously did in a playoff win last season against Dallas' CeeDee Lamb. Warner has had at least 118 tackles in all five seasons and his 35 passes defended since 2018 are tied for the most in the NFL for a linebacker in that span.

**2. LAVONTE DAVID**, Tampa Bay Buccaneers: The 33-year-old David has been one of the game's top linebackers for more than a decade. David is one of three players with at least 25 sacks and 30 takeaways in the last 20 seasons, join-

ing Karlos Dansby and Julius Peppers.

**3. ROQUAN SMITH**, Baltimore Ravens: Smith elevated the Ravens defense as soon as he was acquired in a midseason trade last year. He was third in tackles last season with 169 and also had three interceptions, 4 1/2 sacks and 11 tackles for loss.

**4. DEMARIO DAVIS**, New Orleans Saints: The 34-year-old Davis has shown few signs of slowing down and is still one of the top linebackers in the game. He has 10 straight seasons with at least 90 tackles and had a career-high 6 1/2 sacks last season.

**5. MATT MILANO**, Buffalo Bills: Milano has been one of the better pass defenders at linebacker since entering the league. He had 11 passes defended and three interceptions last season. □



San Francisco 49ers linebacker Fred Warner (54) tackles Dallas Cowboys running back Ezekiel Elliott during the first half of an NFL divisional round playoff football game in Santa Clara, Calif., Sunday, Jan. 22, 2023.

Associated Press